

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE

I. SCOPE

This overview focuses on Library of Congress holdings in all facets about the study of language and linguistics in general and includes the topics of philology, computational linguistics, linguistical theory, semiotics, etymology, lexicology, socio-linguistics, and linguistic geography. Publications and translations limited to specific languages are outside the scope of this overview, are classified with those languages, and have traditionally been the purview of area specialists. The corresponding Collections Policy Statement is Literature and Language.

II. SIZE

The Library has more than 42,000 titles in the ILS as of October 2007 under the subclass P classification for general linguistics and languages. However, these represent a minority of the Library's holdings in field. The Library holds thousands of dissertations on microform from the early 1940s, many of which are contributions to the schools of linguistics. The most recent dissertations are available as abstracts or full-text in *ProQuest Digital Dissertations*. Other microform collections relevant to the study of linguistics can be identified through in-house guides in the Main Reading Room. The Science and Technology Division has a collection of linguistic reports resulting from federal funded grants. The collection contains linguistic analyses of more than four hundred individual languages, including constructed languages such as Esperanto. The small but important collection of "Lesser-Known Languages" consists of boxes of printed materials of all kinds in languages of aboriginal communities or languages that are in danger of disappearing.

III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

The Library receives monographs published by both university and commercial presses, and, through print and online journals, remains current on changing interests in the field from historical, descriptive and applied linguistics to generative grammar, dialectology (including linguistic atlases) to the theoretical aspects of linguistic study. The Library's collection of studies of the theory and practice of translation has been praised by students and by professional translators. The Library's holdings of journals in linguistics for the Western Hemisphere and for Western and Central Europe are among the best in the world.

IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION

In addition to cataloged monographs and serials, the Library holds significant collections in other formats. The ERIC microform collection contains the full text of thousands of grammars, works on methodology, and texts on English as a foreign or as a second language. The translations issued by the Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS) contain texts, some of great length and representing original research, in Eastern European languages and linguistics, bilingualism, and sociolinguistics. Uncataloged materials, retrievable by the call number “lesser-known languages” plus the name of the language (for example, “lesser-known languages Chippewa”) may be the only materials in a given language available to researchers. The Library also has an excellent, although not definitive, collection of works on and in constructed languages in the PM8000's.

V. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS

The Library's foreign holdings, both from developed and developing countries, are not always comprehensive. Those publications not found extensively in the collections are foreign dissertations and conference proceedings, particularly from Africa. One reason is the difficulty of obtaining materials from Third World countries, even though many fine works are produced there.